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THE WORCESTER DISTRICT IN CONGRESS FROM 1789 TO 1857

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A PAPER

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THE WORCESTER DISTRICT

IN CONGRESS.

On the 20th day of November, 1788, the State of Massachusetts was, by a Resolve of the General Court, divided into eight Congressional Districts, to correspond with the number of Representatives provisionally apportioned in the Federal Constitution. Previous to this time eleven States had manifested their approval and acceptance of that instrument, and the people were impatient to see the new government in operation. December 18th was the day appointed in this State for the election of Representatives to the First Congress, and the occasion was awaited with much interest.

This first election was closely contested. Organized political parties did not then exist, but there were two great classes in the community naturally opposed to each other. One comprised generally the wealthy, and those of professional and commercial interests—mostly inhabitants of the large towns; the other was made up principally of those who depended upon their labor for their living, the

yeomanry being the most numerous. The former class advocated the Constitution, the latter distrusted it. Certain well-known causes had brought these forces into collision a short time before, and the excitement occasioned by a formidable insurrection had scarcely been allayed when the Convention called to ratify the Constitution assembled. The Constitution itself narrowly escaped rejection, being saved by a meager majority, secured, as some of its supporters afterwards boasted, by hoodwinking and cajoling the two champions of popular rights, Adams and Hancock. But the Constitution adopted, the people entered upon the experiment with zeal, one element with the determination to prove by demonstration the wisdom of its provisions; the other hoping to remedy by modification and addition certain alleged defects in the document. Federalists and Antifederalists were distinguishing terms.

The eight Congressional Districts of Massachusetts and its outlying province of Maine were designated as follows:

The county of Suffolk to form one district.

The county of Essex to form one district.

The county of Middlesex to form one district.

The county of Worcester to form one district.

The counties of Hampshire and Berkshire to form one district.

The counties of Plymouth and Barnstable to form one district.

The counties of Bristol, Dukes and Nantucket to form one district.

The counties of York, Cumberland and Lincoln, in the District of Maine, to form one district.

The result of the election showed the relative strength of the two classes. In the Suffolk District Samuel Adams, the illustrious patriot (who, according to the *Massachusetts Spy*, was opposed, as the CAUSE of the Revolution, by all the old tories), was defeated by the young and untried Fisher Ames, who had gained distinction by his ready

eloquence in the State Convention, and was sustained by the aristocratic influence in Boston. In the Middlesex District, Elbridge Gerry, the popular candidate, received a bare majority after two trials. Thacher, presumably a Federalist, was elected in the Maine District. Goodhue, Leonard, Partridge and Sedgwick were Federalists, the last named prevailing on the second trial.

In the Worcester District two candidates—Jonathan Grout, of Petersham, and Timothy Paine, of Worcester—received the principal support of their respective parties. Grout, although a lawyer, had sympathized with the insurgents during the Shays rebellion, and was known as a pronounced Antifederalist. Paine had been a tory of the mild stripe in the Revolution. and had readily regained the favor of the community in which he lived by his cheerful acquiescence in the new order. He was a man of wealth and influence, and was supported by the Federalists.

Three trials were necessary before a choice was effected. On the second Paine received a plurality of the votes, Artemas Ward appearing as a candidate of some strength, and drawing from both sides. These failures prolonged the contest through the winter, with increasing excitement and ill feeling. The merits and demerits of the candidates were set forth with earnestness in the public print, and discussed in private with acrimony. Paine was denounced as a tory, an aristocrat, and an enemy to the common people. The objections to Grout were, that in education and ability he was Paine's inferior, and that he had large property interests in Vermont and New Hampshire. A third attempt on the 2d of March, 1789, resulted in Grout's election by a small majority. He took his seat as a member of the First Congress, and served until the 4th of March, 1791, when he retired, having been defeated at the previous election by Artemas Ward.

Jonathan Grout, the first Representative in Congress from the Worcester District, was born in Lunenburg,

Massachusetts, July 23d, 1737. He was a soldier in the Canadian war of 1757–60, and also in the War for Independence. Previous to the Revolution he studied law and settled in Petersham, where he gave some attention to the cultivation of a large farm. He was a member of the Legislature before his election to Congress. In 1803 he removed to Lunenburg, Vermont, and died at Dover, New Hampshire, while attending court, September 8th, 1807.

In 1790, three candidates appeared in the field—Grout; Artemas Ward, of Shrewsbury; and John Sprague, of Lancaster. On the first attempt, October 4th, there was no choice, and another was ordered to take place November 26th, when Ward was chosen by a small majority. This election was probably contested on personal grounds, for the opposition of the Antifederalists, so much feared by the Conservatives, had proved insignificant. The amendments to the Constitution passed by the First Congress had quieted and conciliated the discontented, and in the matter of policy there now seemed to be no dividing line.

In 1792 Ward, Grout and Paine were the candidates, Ward again prevailing. After serving his second term, he voluntarily withdrew.

Artemas Ward, Representative from 1791 to 1795 is chiefly known to fame as the first Major-General of the Revolutionary Army. Born at Shrewsbury November 27th, 1727, he graduated at Harvard College in 1748, and entering the Provincial service became a lieutenant-colonel. He was commissioned by the Continental Congress, and took command of the troops before Boston, but was soon superseded by Washington. He was member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives fifteen years, and its Speaker in 1785; and was also Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. It was in the latter station that he met and sternly rebuked Shays's insurgents at Worcester, while threatened with personal violence by the rebels, some of whom pressed the points of their bayonets against

his breast. In Congress he did not distinguish himself by any noteworthy effort in debate, for he was not a man of ready or graceful speech, but his influence was undoubtedly of weight. Between him and Washington an antipathy had existed from the first; the latter unjustly charged his predecessor in command with cowardice, and the feeling culminated during Ward's term in Congress in the suspension of all intercourse with the President. General Ward died at Shrewsbury, October 27th, 1800.

In 1792 the counties of Worcester, Hampshire and Berkshire were formed into one District, called the Second, and four Representatives were to be chosen. Under this arrangement Dwight Foster, of Brookfield, was elected to the Third Congress. A new division of the State, June 26th, 1794, included in one District—known as the Fourth Western—the towns in Worcester County, with the exception of Western, Petersham, New Braintree, Barre, Sturbridge, Athol, Templeton, Royalston, Gerry, Winchendon, Gardner and Hardwick; and Mr. Foster was chosen the successor of General Ward in November, his competitor being Judge Levi Lincoln, of Worcester. Foster continued to represent the District till his elevation to the Senate in 1800, prevailing over Lincoln in 1796 and 1798.

Dwight Foster, the Representative from 1795 to 1800, was born in Brookfield, December 7th, 1757. He graduated at Brown University in 1774, studied law, and practised in his native town; held the office of Sheriff, and was several years a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. After serving in both branches of the State Legislature, he entered Congress in 1793, and in 1800 was elected a Senator in place of Samuel Dexter, who had resigned. Mr. Foster retired to private life in 1803, and died in Brookfield on the 29th of April, 1823. His son, Hon. Alfred Dwight Foster, was many years a respected citizen of Worcester; and his grandson, the late Hon. Dwight Foster, Attorney-General, and Judge of the Supreme Court of the State, was born here in 1828.

Mr. Foster occasionally took part in the debates of Congress, beginning with a speech against Mr. Madison's commercial resolutions in January, 1794. He was prominent in the councils of his party, and possessed the confidence and esteem of his constituents. The period of his service in the House was a momentous one; and during this time political organizations were formed with definite lines of policy. The term Federal, for several years of broad signification as a party name, came to have a distinct meaning in designating the combination opposed to the political ideas of Thomas Jefferson. But this party, after a brief season of authority, fell never to rise again, and the government passed into the hands of the Republicans. The Federalists were, however, potent in certain localities for many years, and maintained a determined opposition to the party in power,

At the election in 1800, Levi Lincoln, Republican; Jabez Upham, of Brookfield, and Seth Hastings, of Mendon, Federalists, were the contestants; and after three trials Lincoln was declared elected, both for the remainder of Mr. Foster's term and the next Congress. He served from the 6th of February to the 4th of March, 1801, when he resigned to accept the office of Attorney-General in President Jefferson's Cabinet.

Levi Lincoln was born in Hingham, Massachusetts, May 15th, 1749. He learned the art of a blacksmith, which he abandoned for pursuits more congenial, and entering Harvard College, graduated in 1772. After studying law he settled in Worcester, where he rapidly rose in his profession. He was an ardent patriot in the Revolution, and was prominently identified with public measures in the State. In Worcester he was Clerk of the Courts for a short time, and Judge of Probate from 1777 to 1781. He represented the town in the General Court of 1796, and the next year was a member of the State Senate. Retiring from the Cabinet in 1805, he was successively Councillor

Lieutenant-Governor, and for a few months, after the death James Sullivan, in 1808, Governor of the State. In 1811 he was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, but declined the honor. Judge Lincoln died at his home in Worcester on the 14th of April, 1820. He was a man of broad mind and humane instincts; a writer of marked ability and a voluminous correspondent; a scientific farmer before Elkanah Watson; and the confidential friend of Jefferson. He was long the head of the Massachusetts Bar. His sons, Levi, Enoch and William, worthily sustained the reputation of their sire.

On the 22d of June, 1801, an attempt to elect a Representative to succeed Lincoln failed, the Federalists dividing their votes between Upham and Hastings; the Democrat, John Whiting, of Lancaster, receiving a plurality. Upham then withdrew, and, on another trial, Hastings was chosen. For the next twenty years the District was controlled by the Federalists.

Seth Hastings, Representative from 1801 to 1807, was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 5th, 1762. He graduated from Harvard College in 1782, and in 1786 settled in Mendon, where he established an extensive legal practice. He was a member of the State Senate from 1810 to 1812, and Chief Justice of the Court of Sessions for this County from 1819 to 1828. He died in Mendon November 19th, 1831. His son, William S. Hastings, also became a member of Congress.

March 10th, 1802, the County was divided into two Districts. The Worcester South District included New Braintree, Spencer, Leicester, Worcester, Shrewsbury, Northborough and Southborough, with all the towns south of these in the County. At that time there were seventeen Districts in the State.

The candidate put forward by the Democrats at the elections of 1802 and 1804 was Edward Bangs, of Worcester, who also contested with Upham in 1806 and 1808.

Another prominent Democrat was John Spurr, of Charlton, who was supported by his party in 1810 and 1814. Estes Howe, of Sutton, was the defeated candidate in 1812.

Jabez Upham succeeded Seth Hastings in 1807, and was re-ëlected two years later. Before the expiration of his second term he resigned in consequence of ill health, and died November 8th, 1811. He was born in Brookfield in 1764, and graduated at Harvard College in 1785. He was a lawyer of reputation and large practice.

Joseph Allen, of Worcester, was chosen to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Mr. Upham, and served during the last session of the Eleventh Congress, from December, 1810, to March, 1811. He declined reëlection, though clearly the choice of his party. A man of quiet tastes and peaceful disposition, he naturally dreaded the turmoil of public life; and the vivid delineation given by his friend, William Stedman (who had represented the Worcester North District), of the furious combats in the House, in which Josiah Quincy, chief gladiator among the Federalists, was the central figure, had not favorably inclined him towards the service. Stedman himself probably found the politics of the times too strong for his taste, and resigning with Upham in 1810, had succeeded Allen as Clerk of the Courts. It may be mentioned here, that two later Representatives of the North District—Abijah Bigelow and Joseph G. Kendall—found, on retiring from Congress, a comfortable asylum in the County Office at Worcester.

Joseph Allen was born in Boston September 13th, 1749. His mother was a sister of Samuel Adams. He removed to Worcester from Leicester, where he had engaged in trade, in 1776, and was appointed Clerk of the Courts. This office he resigned in 1810. He was three years a member of the Executive Council, and twice a Presidential Elector. In educational matters he had a deep

interest, and did much for the advancement of sound learning. He died on the 1st of September, 1827. Two of his sons, George and Charles, were distinguished in later times.

The next Representative was Elijah Brigham of Westborough, whose term extended through the memorable period of the War with Great Britain. Mr. Brigham was an earnest partisan, and, it is presumed, fully sustained the efforts of his faction to harass the Administration. His name appears among those signed to the protest against the declaration of war, in June, 1812; and he acted and voted in Congress with the minority in all matters of importance. He was a man of strong character and plain speech. We have from an aged inhabitant a reminiscence of his interview with General Hull soon after the surrender of Detroit. The latter was proceeding to his home in Newton after his release by the British, and met Judge Brigham at Westborough, who reproached him, particularly for denying, in his proclamation to the Canadians, the rights of war to those who employed savage allies, and then, through fear of retaliation, losing his moral strength in the emergency that followed. The heart of the unfortunate general was no lighter as he went his way.

Elijah Brigham, Representative from 1811 to 1816, was born in Westborough, July 7th, 1751. He graduated at Dartmouth College in 1778, and studied law but did not practise. For several years he was a merchant in his native town, and during this time served in both branches of the General Court, twelve years as Senator. He was two years a Councillor, and sixteen years Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. He died suddenly at Washington, February 22d, 1816.

In 1812, six towns—Hardwick, Petersham, Dana and Barre, in this County; Hopkinton and Holliston, in Middlesex—were added to the Worcester District. Another change in 1814 took from it Barre, Dana, Southborough

and Holliston, and added Oakham and Paxton. The State (including Maine) then comprised twenty Districts.

Benjamin Adams, of Uxbridge, came next in order, as the successor of Elijah Brigham. The Democrats at this time presented Dr. Abraham Lincoln, of Worcester, a brother of the elder Levi Lincoln, as their candidate; and in 1818 they supported Sumner Bastow, of Sutton. Mr. Adams entered Congress to find a new and important subject claiming the consideration of our national legislators. The few years preceding and during the war had witnessed a great development of the manufacturing industries in this country. During that time native resources and ingenuity were taxed to the utmost to supply the wants of a beleaguered people; and numerous mills and factories sprung up which flourished in a good degree while hostilities were in progress. In New England, and Massachusetts especially, was this enterprise visible more than in other parts. The sudden opening of the ports, and influx of European products following the peace, brought many of these establishments to a stand-still; and their owners were soon clamoring at the doors of Congress for relief, which was in some measure afforded by a bill passed in 1816. But certain articles—particularly cotton and woollen fabrics—were left inadequately protected against foreign competition. Mr. Adams, many of whose constituents were among the complainants, heartily espoused the cause of the manufacturers, and exerted himself to secure the passage of an act suited to their requirements; and this was nearly accomplished in 1820. But it appears that our Representative either misunderstood or did not regard the sentiment of his State, which, strange as it may seem, was in direct opposition to what it has since been, and is to-day. The farmers of that time were keenly alive to their own interests; and with them joined the shopkeepers of Boston, who had taken alarm at the threatened restrictions upon commerce. To prevent further action by Congress, a

meeting was held in Faneuil Hall, over which William Gray, the merchant-prince presided; and Daniel Webster made a sonorous speech in support of resolutions to the effect, that a protective tariff would diminish industry, impede prosperity, and corrupt the morals of the people. The current of opinion thus directed, augmented by the artful management of his opponent, was too strong for Mr. Adams to withstand, and he went under; but with commendable independence defended his course to the end. He appeared as a candidate in 1822, and was again defeated.

Benjamin Adams, Representative from 1816 to 1821, was an able lawyer and a useful public man. He was born in Mendon on the 18th of December, 1764, and died in Uxbridge March 28th, 1837. A graduate of Brown University in 1788. He was in both branches of the State Legislature before he went to Congress, and again a State Senator from 1822 to 1825.

Jonathan Russell came into the District in 1818 with the prestige resulting from a successful diplomatic career, and the promise of a still more brilliant future. Fixing his residence in Mendon, he entered actively into local politics with the evident intention of supplanting the incumbent in Congress, and accomplished his purpose two years later. Mr. Russell was an early, if not the first example of a "Northern man with Southern principles," and freely expressed the opinion that the North had no right to restrict the South in the matter of the extension of slavery. Mr. Adams was as strongly of the opposite belief, but was defeated, notwithstanding the aroused anti-slavery sentiment attending the admission of Missouri into the Union; the tariff issue, as before stated, just then over-balancing even this consideration in the local mind.

Having overthrown one Adams, Mr. Russell, after his entrance into Congress, attempted the ruin of another, soon to become the most important figure in the National Government; but in this a woful disappointment awaited

him, and caused him to retire at the end of his term overwhelmed with disgrace and chagrin. Briefly told, this is the story. As one of the Commissioners to negotiate the treaty of peace with Great Britain, Mr. Russell had been associated with John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, Albert Gallatin and James A. Bâyard. Two of these gentlemen —Adams and Clay—were at the time of Russell's election to Congress rival aspirants to the Presidency to succeed Mr. Monroe. Andrew Jackson and William H. Crawford also appeared as candidates. Mr. Adams, from his position as Secretary of State, and from other circumstances, had a decided advantage ; and the Southern element combined to effect his destruction. Of these conspirators Russell became the willing tool, and deliberately charged Mr. Adams with treachery to his trust at Ghent, and a willingness to sacrifice Southern and Western interests when it was proposed to grant to the British the free navigation of the Mississippi in exchange for the right to fish at Newfoundland. In response to a resolution of the House of Representatives, Russell furnished what he declared to be a copy of a letter written by himself to Mr. Monroe as Secretary of State in 1815, in which the offensive charges were made. The original of this letter could not be found at the State Department, a fact of which the conspirators were probably aware before the call for the copy was made ; but, unfortunately for their cause, it turned up in the possession of Mr. Monroe, and was found to differ essentially from the spurious substitute, in being innocuous in criticism of the man they were trying to injure. Our Representative could not face the storm of indignation and scorn that followed, and he retreated into obscurity. Mr. Adams's advance to the Presidency was materially aided by this affair and its unexpected result.

Jonathan Russell, Representative from 1821 to 1823, was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1771, and graduated at Brown University in 1791. A merchant in his

native city for several years. Mr. Madison appointed him to the diplomatic service in France, and he was afterwards transferred to England, where he was Chargé d'Affaires when war was declared in 1812. He became Minister to Sweden in 1814, and was one of the Commissioners at Ghent the same year. He returned to America in 1818, and was a member of the General Court from Mendon in 1820. The unlucky transaction before related closed his public career. He died in Milton, Massachusetts, February 16th, 1832. Mr. Russell was a man of good abilities and a writer of force and elegance.

Jonas Sibley, of Sutton, was the next Representative, serving from 1823 to 1825. He was elected over Benjamin Adams, nominally as a Democrat; but party spirit was then dead, and names signified little. Mr. Sibley was defeated in 1824. He was born in Sutton in 1762, and died there in 1834. He was many years a member of the Legislature, and held other public offices.

Two men now came to the front, who together exerted a controlling force in the politics of this region for the next quarter of a century. Levi Lincoln and John Davis, so long associated for party purposes, were at first of different political principles. Lincoln, just entering public life at the time of the last war with Great Britain, took a wise and patriotic course, and in the Massachusetts Legislature boldly rebuked the seditious spirit by which that body was influenced, and tried to stem the current of madness then threatening destruction to the Nation. Davis was charged by his political opponents in later years with having manifested exultation by throwing up his hat in the public street of Worcester when the news of the burning of Washington by the British was received; which charge, it is only fair to state, he vehemently denied. It is well known, however, that he was ardent as a Federalist, and after the conflict he helped to swell the cry, "What have we gained by the War?"—a question no American would

think of asking to-day. But when the "Era of Good Feeling" came, previous records were blotted out, and men of different proclivities combined for a common object. Levi Lincoln entered in 1825 upon his non-partisan nine years' administration as Governor, and John Davis was brought forward at the same time as a candidate for Congress, to which he was elected in August, 1825, after four trials. Jonas Sibley and Sumner Bastow were his opponents. From that time till his resignation he met no opposition worthy of mention, and was four times reëlected by almost unanimous votes.

John Davis, Representative from 1825 to 1834, was a native of Northborough, born January 13th, 1787. He graduated at Yale College in 1812, and studied law with Hon. Francis Blake of Worcester. Mr. Davis resigned his seat in Congress to accept the office of Governor, to which he was chosen by the Legislature in 1834, the popular election having failed. The following year he became a United States Senator, remaining in that station till 1841, when he was again Governor for two years. He was reëlected to the Senate in 1845, and served till 1853. His death occurred at Worcester April 19th, 1854. Mr. Davis's course in Congress was consistent as a Northern man, and he was particularly distinguished as an advocate of protection for American industries. In 1842 an immense Whig mass-meeting at Dayton, Ohio, nominated him for Vice-President on the ticket with Henry Clay; but this arrangement was not ratified by the national convention of 1844, owing, it is said, to the hostility of Daniel Webster to his former colleague.

The separation of Maine in 1820 left thirteen Districts in Massachusetts. In 1833 the State was re-divided into twelve Districts, designated by numbers, and Worcester was attached to the Fifth, which comprised most of the towns in the eastern half of this County. Another division in 1842 reduced the number of Districts in the State to ten.

Levi Lincoln represented the District from 1834 to 1841, succeeding John Davis. As part of a long and honorable public career, his service at Washington does not, perhaps, need special mention. He was faithful in his allegiance to the Whig party in all essential matters of party policy; but his sense of justice and right manifested itself at times in opposition to his political associates, and asserted the manly independence which was a ruling element in his nature. On one notable occasion he defended a political enemy with such ardor against the attack of a brother Whig, that the Democrats had his remarks printed for use as a campaign document.

Governor Lincoln, as he was familiarly called, was born in Worcester, October 25th, 1782. He graduated at Harvard College in 1802, and studied law in his father's office. In 1812 he was a State Senator, and a member of the lower branch of the Legislature several times from 1814 to 1822, serving as Speaker in 1822. Lieutenant-Governor in 1823, and a Judge of the Supreme Court in 1824. In 1825 he became Governor of the State. He would undoubtedly have been elected a Senator in Congress in 1827 had he not positively declined in favor of one of illustrious name. Who can tell what different destiny might have awaited this Nation had Levi Lincoln occupied the Senator's chair in 1830 instead of Daniel Webster; of whom his biographer says, in speaking of the nullification crisis: "If he had not been there, it can scarcely be imagined that the hands of the Executive could have been strengthened by the public refutation of a heresy which threatened a direct obstruction to the laws of the United States." But the consequences of the reply to Hayne cannot be illustrated by mere words.

Governor Lincoln gave up his seat in Congress in 1841 to accept the place of Collector of Customs at Boston. There is an implied censure for this action in the Diary of John Quincy Adams, who appears to have regarded it as a

lapse in dignity on the part of one who had been in high official station. John Tyler removed the ex-Governor in 1843, who, the next year, was elected to the State Senate, and made President of that body in 1845. He was Worcester's first Mayor in 1848. Acting with the Whig party (of which he was a recognized leader) until it ceased to exist, he finally gave his support to the Republicans in war-time, and as Presidential Elector, voted for Abraham Lincoln in 1865. This was his last public service. He died May 29th, 1868.

The candidates for Congress opposed to Lincoln were Maturin L. Fisher in 1834, and Jubal Harrington in 1836. In 1838 the Democrats supported Isaac Davis, and some disaffected Whigs voted for Charles Allen. Isaac Davis was the Democratic candidate in 1840, and also at the special election in 1841.

Charles Hudson, of Westminster, came next in order, serving from 1841 to 1849. He was a self-made man, and achieved distinction through native force of character and laborious habits. Born in Marlborough, November 14th, 1795, he acquired the rudiments of an education under great difficulties, toiling until he reached manhood upon the farm. At first a schoolmaster, and then a Universalist minister, he entered political life at the age of thirty-three, and soon became prominent in State affairs. He was successively a member of the House and Senate, where he had much to do with educational and railroad matters ; and he was afterwards one of the Governor's Council. In Congress he made strong speeches in favor of the tariff, and against the Mexican war ; and took a decided, though not a radical position in regard to slavery. He was defeated at the election in 1848, ostensibly because he supported Zachary Taylor for President ; but other causes undoubtedly contributed to this result. On retiring from Congress he issued a manly address to his constituency, in which he maintained the wisdom and consistency of his course.

Mr. Hudson was offered the place of Secretary of the Interior by President Taylor, which he declined. He was Naval Officer at Boston several years ; and in 1861 his old friend and fellow-member in the House of Representatives, Abraham Lincoln, gave him the lucrative office of Assessor of Internal Revenue for the Middlesex District. In his later life he was the author of town histories and other works which are much commended. He died at his home in Lexington May 4th, 1881.

Pliny Merrick was the Democratic candidate for Congress in 1842. Isaac Davis in 1844 and 1848, and Walter A. Bryant in 1846, were the others during this period. The new Liberty Party candidates were Rev. C. P. Grosvenor in 1841, Phineas Crandall in 1842, and R. B. Hubbard in 1844 and 1846.

The name of Charles Allen is indissolubly connected with the Free Soil movement of 1848, which marked the beginning of the extinction of the Whig party. His part in that stirring contest was a prominent one ; and, as an uncompromising advocate of freedom, he may justly be ranked with Giddings, Hale, Chase, Sumner and Wilson. But it would be claiming too much for human nature to maintain that this revolt against the policy of the old leaders was purely one of principle, and that other elements and influences did not, in any degree, enter into it. A man of remarkable mental qualities, with that inflexibility of character inherited through the Adams blood, Judge Allen harbored strong personal dislikes, and was implacable in his resentment. His canvass for a seat in Congress, after he had repudiated the nomination of Taylor at Philadelphia, was conducted with great bitterness, and with an apparent intention to gibbet certain prominent men in the popular mind. His attack upon the private character of Webster, made in the House of Representatives, greatly impaired his usefulness and contracted his influence in that body.

Charles Allen, Member of Congress for two terms, from 1849 to 1853, was born in Worcester August 9th, 1797. A son of Hon. Joseph Allen. He studied law, and practised in New Braintree, but soon returned to his native place. He was a member of the Massachusetts Legislature several years, serving in both branches ; a member of the Northeastern Boundary Commission in 1842; and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, 1842 to 1845. He led the Free Soil forces of this locality in 1848, and, as a candidate for Congress, defeated Charles Hudson in November ; but, lacking a majority, was not himself elected until the following January.

On the resignation of Chief Justice Shaw, Judge Allen was tendered the appointment as his successor but declined it. He was Chief Justice of the Superior Court from 1859 to 1867. A member of the Peace Congress of 1861. He died August 6th, 1869. Judge Allen was one of the ablest public men of his time, and had few equals at the bar. His powers were restricted through life by physical disability.

April 27th, 1852, eleven Districts were formed in the State. The Worcester District, designated as the Ninth, comprised thirty-seven towns in the County.

Ira M. Barton was the Whig candidate for Congress in 1850 and 1852. John S. C. Knowlton served the Democrats in 1850, Isaac Davis in 1852 and 1854, and Nathaniel Wood in 1856. J. G. Thurston received a few National American votes the year last named.

Alexander DeWitt, Representative from 1853 to 1857, was born in New Braintree, April 2d, 1797. He received only a limited education, and made his way to success in life through his own exertions. As a cotton manufacturer he acquired a competency ; and became quite prominent in local politics. He represented Oxford several years in the Legislature, and was also a member of the Senate. An early and active Free-Soiler, he was supported by

Charles Allen and other prominent leaders of the Free Democracy, as a candidate for Representative in 1852, and was elected. Joining the Native American or "Know-Nothing" party, he was returned by the votes of that organization in 1854, and again received its nomination in 1856, when he was defeated. He died at Oxford on the 13th of January, 1879.

Colonel DeWitt was a man of much kindness of heart and manner, and his social qualities probably did more for his advancement than anything else. In Congress his good nature brought him into trouble at home, and it was asserted that "his habits of intimacy and good fellowship with slave-holding members had materially weakened his steadfastness of principle, and determination to stand by the rights and dignity of his constituents." His alacrity in holding up his cane at the request of Preston S. Brooks, when the latter was boasting before the House of his assault upon Senator Sumner, was much enlarged upon by stump speakers and newspapers. It was understood that he was not to be a candidate in 1856, and that the field would be clear for the nominee of the Republicans, who had become strong enough to demand a share of the offices. With this view, Henry Chapin, an aspirant to popular honors, received the Republican nomination, which he accepted in person before the convention, and his name remained in the public prints for several days as the candidate of that party. But if there was an agreement, the Know-Nothings broke it, and Colonel DeWitt was renominated ; his supporters judging, and with good reason, that his personal popularity would carry him in. After failing to effect a compromise, Mr. Chapin precipitately withdrew, leaving the Republicans in the lurch, and the way open, as it seemed, to an easy victory for DeWitt. In this emergency, Eli Thayer was brought forward, and after an extraordinary canvass of six days, elected, receiving 8,920 votes to 4,414 for DeWitt.

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